



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

JANUARY 2011



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Jan. 17, 2011

Four members attended. We were joined by Brad Young, a readjustment counselor with the Vet Center of the Veterans Administration in White River Junction. The Vet Center is for combat veterans of any war to come to for help with personal issues, such as the effects of post traumatic stress disorder, family issues and benefits. While affiliated with the VA, the vet center operates separately. Notes from counseling groups are kept private from the VA records, for example.

Different programs at the Vet Center focus on Vietnam veterans and those whose service was in the global war on terror. A combat veterans wives' group is a possibility. Brad Young is from Rutland and is currently counseling vets twice a week at space provided by Castleton State College, which potentially might evolve into another vet center. Besides White River Junction, Burlington hosts a vet center, which was the first one in the country.

Brad explained that besides the formal psychotherapeutic groups, counselors are available for drop-in talks with vets. The center in White river provides a safe space for vets to simply "hang out" if they wish. A kitchenette, pool table, television and couches complement the counseling rooms and professional staff. The center also serves people who are close to vets, including families and girlfriends, who may need assistance.

Brad explained that the space at the Castleton State College Student Center is being developed in "the hopes of possibly having a vet center outstation at some point, which would be available for all the folks in this area." He said there seemed to be a pocket of veterans in this area who could benefit from such a center. Brad is currently assigned to the Rutland area a couple of days a week, an amount of time that could grow as the demand increases. Establishment of a formal vet center "outstation" in Castleton would require proving a need exists, he said.

The Vet Center is located at 2 Gilman Office Complex, White River Junction, VT 05001, tel. 802-295-2908. Anyone interested in joining one of the counseling groups can call that number or Brad's cell phone at 802-343-8674.

President Andy Megrath noted that it takes congressional action to establish a new vet center, and he's invited Brad to meet with a representative of Sen. Bernie Sanders' office with that possibility in mind. In the meantime, Brad hopes to spread word of the services available at Castleton by word of mouth, visiting local armories and "yellow ribbon" events and possibly bringing the VA's mobile vet center to town.

Returning to regular business, members approved without dissent the November minutes as printed in the newsletter.

Dave Mathis reported \$27,595.17, in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. Dave noted the bank is now charging \$3 a month for a printed statement. The chapter will review issues such as service charges and interest, with the possibility of switching banks to get more favorable treatment.

The chapter approved a series of appropriations based on the need for the chapter to keep its balance below \$25,000. Maintaining a balance above that changes the status of the chapter with both the national VVA and the Internal Revenue Service. The change would increase various paperwork and filing requirements.

With an eye toward lowering our balances, as well as helping the organizations targeted, Andy Megrath made several suggestions and led a discussion of them. At the conclusion, Jack Crowther moved to make the following donations:

- \$1,300 to the Dodge House for homeless veterans in Rutland. Andy Megrath, a member of the Dodge House board, explained that the home is planning to establish a women's annex in a separate building. It will cost about \$1,300 for the plumbing and electrical work to accommodate the washer and dryer that will allow the women to do their laundry.

- An additional \$2,500 to be set aside for a replacement van for the Dodge House. The present van has in excess of 60,000 miles on it and is showing its age. The Dodge House is approaching three local auto dealers seeking offers on a replacement. The dealership will have the right to put its advertising on the vehicle in return for any price concessions.

- \$2,500 for the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County for its programs for area youth. The chapter has supported the club in the past.

Dave Mathis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Andy reported a \$250 donation from Carl Baldwin of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who has joined our chapter after previously being an unaffiliated VVA member. Carl has ties to the area and sent us a picture of himself in front of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland, which he visited in the fall.

Andy reported that VVA in Vermont has 615 members and 35 associate members. Nationally, there are 64,541 members, including 2,012 who are incarcerated and 271 permanently hospitalized. Andy also noted that Vermont VVA membership is 614, plus 35 associate members. The number of Americans missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia stands at 1,707 nationally, with five of those from Vermont.

Andy reviewed the fact that upon consultation with Larry Young, Dave Mathis, Jack Crowther, Bub Crosby, and Dick Doyle, all of whom are officers or board members, he had sent a hardship assistance check to BW, who is a board member, to assist with a truck repair bill he was unable to pay. All but one of those consulted had said they didn't feel the money needed to be paid back.

Jack Crowther, who had favored repayment, said he had learned more about the situation and would approve non-repayment. He recommended that the national VVA treasurer be notified, if that is required by the national constitution when a board member receives VVA funds. Andy said he would check on that requirement when he attended a national VVA function in a few days in San Francisco.

Jack moved that the hardship grant of \$1,000, without a repayment requirement, be approved. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously. The national treasurer will be notified, if required.

Andy said he had been approved for a hardship grant from the national VVA to cover most of the expenses involved with the coming San Francisco trip.

Jack suggested that the chapter make a concerted search for a vice president who can assist Andy as Andy takes on additional duties as vice president of the VVA State Council. Anyone interested should make their interest known by the March meeting, when nominations are normally made. Elections are in April.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE CHAPTER WILL NOT MEET IN FEBRUARY. THE NEXT MEETING
WILL BE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES
AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

MARCH 2011



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING March 9, 2011

Six members attended, including new life member George Legace of Londonderry.

Also attending was Christine Morgan, director of the Dodge House in Rutland for homeless veterans. She thanked the chapter for its ongoing support and presented us with a plaque expressing the Dodge House's thanks. At its January meeting, Chapter 1 had approved donations to the Dodge House of \$2,500 toward purchase of a van to transport residents of Dodge House and \$1,300 for plumbing and electrical work for a women's section of the home.

Christine reported that the Dodge House had acquired a 2010 Dodge Caravan with about 20,000 miles on it for between \$14,500 and \$14,700, a big improvement on its former vehicle. She said about half the plumbing and electrical work for the women's unit had been completed.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved without dissent.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a balance of \$22,409.75 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

President Andy Megrath reviewed a change in financial filing requirements of the national VVA.

Andy discussed his recent trip to San Francisco to a meeting of VVA state council presidents. As vice president of the Vermont State Council, he attended with Vermont State Council President John Miner of Bennington. According to Andy, Vermont was one of three states whose representatives received "hardship" assistance from national VVA to cover the trip. With that help and assistance from the Vermont State Council, there was no cost to Chapter 1. Andy said of the trip: "It was worthwhile for me. I did learn a lot of stuff, so that next year when I step into John's shoes I'll have a better idea, and that's why I've gone to Washington for the last two trips, April and October of last year." Andy is expected to replace John Miner as president of the VVA State Council next year.

In response to a request from the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation, Jack Crowther moved to donate \$50, as we have in the past. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously.

Dick Doyle moved to donate \$100 to Friends of Veterans, a group based in White River Junction that combats homelessness among veterans. Dick was involved in the group's work in the past. The Friends provide vouchers to vendors that the vets are in debt to, rather than grants to the veterans themselves. Motion seconded by Jack Crowther and passed unanimously.

Andy relayed thanks from Bill Whitney for recent assistance provided to Bill by the chapter.

Frank Weatherby, representing the Warrior Connection, requested a donation for a coming retreat for veterans in April. Frank is a life member of Chapter 1. Headed by Anne Black, PhD., and using volunteer facilitators, the retreat helps veterans with readjustment issues. Five of the eight vets who have signed up for the retreat so far are Vermonters, and four are Vietnam vets. The retreat will take place in East Dummerston, Vt.

Dave Mathis moved to donate \$200 to the retreat. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Approved unanimously. Further information on the project is available at www.warriorconnection.org.

Andy Megrath and John Miner recently attended the funeral of Richard "Doc" Lanctot, a past president of the St. Albans VVA chapter. The funeral was non-military, in line with Richard's wishes. He was a combat veteran and medic and died at age 61.

Andy noted that when he sends out newsletters by email, some bounce back, indicating the email address is no longer valid. Thus it's important that members on our email list who change their email addresses let us know of the changes. More than 40 members receive the newsletter by email, saving the chapter significant mailing costs.

The chapter agreed to pay for Andy to attend the VVA national convention in August in Reno, Nevada, from Aug. 15 to 21. Dick Doyle moved to have the chapter pick up his expenses. Motion passed unanimously.

Dick also moved to have the chapter pick up Andy's hotel expense for the regional VVA conference in Connecticut in May. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Approved unanimously.

The following slate of officers was nominated for the year ahead: Andy Megrath, president; Dave Mathis, vice president; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Bub Crosby, Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Maurice Burden and Mike Divoll, board members. At present, there is no candidate for treasurer. Anyone interested in filling that position or any other should get in touch with an officer or board member and put their name forward. Election of officers and board members will take place **Tuesday, April 12 (Note: This is not our usual meeting date).**

Also to be voted on at the annual meeting is a change in the chapter bylaws to allow the appropriation of money by the chapter between meetings, if a majority of the officers and board members agree. The added wording to Article XI is as follows: **The president, or vice president in the absence of the president, may authorize expenditures of up to a total of \$1,000 between meetings with approval of a majority of officers and board members, that is, five people. A description of the expenditure or expenditures will be presented at the next meeting and entered into the minutes of the meeting."**

Also proposed is a change in the official address of the chapter, reflecting the fact that we no longer have a post office box. The new address will be: **Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter # 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026.**

Andy Megrath described efforts he is making to support establishment of a third Vermont Vet Center at Castleton State College, which has offered space for such a center. A Veterans Administration readjustment counselor, Brad Young, is already meeting twice a week with veterans at Castleton. On Tuesday nights there is a session with combat veterans. A spouse's group is starting up.

A possibility exists for an official vet center in Castleton, to supplement existing centers in South Burlington and White River Junction. Andy and State Council President John Miner are pursuing the idea. To demonstrate veterans' interest in the area, veterans are invited to file their DD 214 service records with the counselor, Brad Young. Filing the form does not require participation in the center programs but only support for an area vet center. Forms may be mailed to Andy at VVA Chapter 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, Vt. 05701-4026. He will pass on the forms to Brad.

On the recommendation of Andy Megrath, Dick Doyle moved to increase the stipend for attendance at State Council meetings from \$30 to \$50 per attendee. Seconded by George Legace. Passed unanimously.

A 30 by 60-foot flag will be visiting all 50 states, ending its journey at Ground Zero in New York City on Sept. 11. The Red Knights firefighters group will bring the flag to Vermont in June and to Rutland June 28. Stay tuned for details.

Derby, Vt., is forming a new VVA chapter, having signed up more than 20 prospective 9members. A St. Johnsbury chapter is also in the works.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE TUESDAY, APRIL 12, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026
Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

APRIL 2011



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING April 12, 2011

Ten members attended, including Doug Bailey, who came up from Connecticut. He had attended our 25th Anniversary in 2005, traveling by motorcycle.

Dick Doyle presided over the election of officers. Nominated were Andy Megrath, president; Dave Mathis, vice president; Jack Crowther, secretary; Ed Wiehe, treasurer. As there were no further nominations, Jack Crowther moved that the nominees be elected. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Motion passed unanimously.

Dave Mathis moves into the vice president's position, replacing Larry Young, while Ed Wiehe replaces Dave as treasurer. The chapter thanks Larry for his service as v.p. for the past several years.

Nominated for the board of directors were Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Bub Crosby, Mike Divoll, and Mo Burden. As there were no other nominees, Dave Mathis moved that the slate be elected. Seconded by Ed Wiehe. Motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a balance of \$23,366.87 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

Dave Mathis reported on the State Council meeting April 9 in Essex. The chief news was that the VVA-sponsored service officer program is strapped for funding. Though the service officers are volunteers, money is needed for training and expenses. The national VVA is reportedly cutting funding. State Council President John Miner will be asking the chapters in Vermont for help. The state of Vermont is expected to continue support for the program with a contribution of \$5,000.

Dave reported there are 635 VVA members in Vermont, including 35 new members.

A bank account is being set up for maintaining the flag at the Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Randolph. The flag is subject to severe wear at that location, so it will now only be flown at certain times, specifically for periods surrounding Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

As mentioned at the last meeting, Andy Megrath, who is vice president of the VVA State Council and in line to become president in 2012, will attend the national VVA convention in Reno, Nev., in August, accompanying John Miner, the State Council president. The chapter voted in March to pay for Andy's expenses.

This year the annual picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington will take place on June 25, with a VVA State Council meeting to follow. VVA members are invited to take part by serving the residents of the home and then having their own meal after the residents have been served. Dave Mathis moved to approve the chapter's assessment of \$80 for the picnic. Seconded by Bill Whitney and approved unanimously.

Andy Megrath, who also serves on the board of the Dodge House in Rutland for homeless vets, reported on some renovation work at the home. The chapter recently donated \$3,800 to the Dodge House to assist in purchasing a van and for the renovations. There are four men living at the Dodge House at present, with plans afoot to house two women veterans.

Anyone interested in buying a print of the "Reflections" art print by Lee Teter can visit www.vietnamreflections.com. The print portrays a surviving vet, dressed in business clothes, leaning against The Wall in Washington. Besides the names of the Vietnam War dead, the wall in the well known painting appears to reflect the images of soldiers that the survivor is thinking about. Regular costs of \$35 to \$50 for the print are reduced for VVA members from now through June 17. Other related items are also on sale. The website does not show the discount, which was described to the chapter in a flyer. Therefore, be sure to call and ask for your discount as a VVA member. The sale of the print is a project of VVA Chapter 172 in Cumberland, Md.

Dick Doyle noted that April 13 would be the 31st anniversary of the chapter getting its charter.

Dick Doyle moved to approve two revisions in the chapter bylaws. Seconded by Doug Bailey. Approved unanimously. The two changes are as follows:

1. A change in Chapter One's address from a post office box to 15 Wales St. in Rutland. We no longer have a post office box.
2. A change in Article XI adding the following: "The president, or vice president in the absence of the president, may authorize expenditures up to a total of \$1,000 between meetings with approval of a majority of officers and board members, that is, five people. A description of the expenditure or expenditures will be presented at the next meeting and entered into the minutes of the meeting."

Previously, the chapter had an emergency fund of \$150 that could be used if approved by the president and one other officer. That fund continues to exist. The addition to the bylaws for spending up to \$1,000 between meetings was made to deal with situations in which larger amounts of money were need between meetings. This situation has arisen on two recent occasions.

Returning to the subject of funding for service officers, Andy noted a cutback in the funds for service officers from national VVA. Two VVA service officers living in New Hampshire serve veterans from Canada, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, so they cover a lot of cases. There has also been a service officer connected with the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. A couple of other service officer volunteers are apparently no longer active. The state of Vermont employs two service officers in the state Office of Veterans Affairs.

Dave Mathis moved to donate \$1,000 to the service officer program of the State Council. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously. Jack Crowther noted that more could be donated when the funding picture becomes clearer. Andy noted that the donation box at the Vermont Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon is taking in money that goes to the service officer program.

Andy briefly discussed a website being started by the National Center for PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), which is headquartered at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction. A flyer promoting the project was handed out. The website designer is inviting vets who have been treated for PTSD or are in treatment to speak about the subject on video. If the vet approves of the video, it may be used on the website. If after viewing their video, the vet does not approve of its use, the video will not be used. The videos will be in the form of interviews with a standard set of questions. Andy stressed that the participants are not required to talk about their experiences unless they wish to. For more information, you may call 802-566-0402 or email theptsdproject@gmail.com.

Andy again noted that when he sends out newsletters by email, some bounce back, indicating the email address is no longer valid. Thus it's important that members on our email list who change their email addresses let us know of the changes. More than 40 members receive the newsletter by email, saving the chapter significant mailing costs. Please notify us also of changes in regular mail addresses.

The giant flag that is traveling the country and destined to fly at Ground Zero in New York City on Sept. 11, will be in Bennington to be flown June 27. Rutland will fly it on June 28 from 3 to 6 p.m. On June 29, it will go on to Camp Johnson in Colchester. It will then go on to Rouses Point, N.Y., and Burlington.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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JUNE 2011



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

June 8, 2011



On May 24, Gov. Peter Shumlin signed the bill establishing a Vermont motorcycle license plate for veterans. VVA Chapter 1 president Andy Megrath, who actively pushed for the bill, looks on at the governor's left. Sen. Margaret Flory is at Shumlin's right. Also pictured (standing from left): Rep. David Potter, unidentified, Rep. William Canavan, VVA State Council President John Miner, Rutland Mayor Chris Louras, Vermont motor vehicle Commissioner Robert Ide, unidentified, and local VFW Auxiliary President Merry Tredwell. The ceremony took place in the Chapter 1 rooms in Rutland.

Seven members attended, as well as visitor Larry Lyman of Clarendon, a Vietnam veteran who was interested in our group.

President Andy Megrath reported on plans of the Dodge House for homeless veterans to admit two female veterans in a separate building at the Dodge House property in July. Renovations to an existing building have been going on for several months. Work has been helped by donation of furniture and services. Three members of the Rutland Garden Club have volunteered to do some planting, and local master gardeners have donated nearly 30 plants. There will probably be an open house the first week in July.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of \$22,024.78 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

Andy reported on a productive meeting of the VVA regional conference in Rocky Hill, Conn., in May. Among those present were John Rowan, national VVA president, and Bruce Whitaker, who will challenge Rowan for the presidency at this summer's convention. One issue that is simmering at the national level is whether the organization should change its name and constitution to bring veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars into the group. Both Rowan and Whitaker talked about that issue, which is sure to come up at the national convention in August.

Whitaker was frankly against such a change. Rowan's position wasn't so clearcut. "It's a hot issue and I'm waiting to see what happens in Reno," Andy said. Reno is the site of the national VVA convention.

Andy was asked his own opinion. He said that as of that moment he felt the organization should stay as is. He cited the strong voice that VVA now has with its present identity. But he is still "willing to listen" to opinions on the matter.

Referring to the national election of VVA officers, Andy said he was unsure if some of the candidates vying for national offices would be able to work together as the current leadership has.

The giant Patriots Flag (30 by 60 feet) that is traveling the country and destined to fly at Ground Zero in New York City on Sept. 11, will be in Bennington to be flown June 27. Rutland will fly it on June 28 from 3 to 6 p.m. in front of City Hall. Andy Megrath is involved in the project and will bring the flag over from New Hampshire. On June 29, the flag will go on to the VFW in Essex Junction. It then will travel by Homeland Security helicopter to Rouses Point, N.Y., and will return to Burlington by boat. It then heads on to the Barre-Montpelier area, Lebanon, N.H.,

and on to Boston, where it will serve as a backdrop for a Boston Pops concert.

In a significant boost to chapter finances, Rutland VFW Post 648, which owns the building housing our office, recently voted to stop charging the chapter \$200 a month rent, so long as local VFW finances permit. A number of Chapter 1 members support the VFW as members of that group. Chapter 1 is obviously grateful for the generosity shown by Post 648.

The following Chapter 1 members have chosen to have their email addresses listed in the newsletter to share with other members. Anyone who would like to add their name to the list can simply email Dick Doyle, who is maintaining the list. Dick's email is rpdoyle3@myfairpoint.net. Mass mailings to the list should be limited to Chapter 1 business.

Also note that you can have your newsletter delivered by email without putting your name on list that appears in the newsletter. Just make it clear to Dick. Electronic delivery of the newsletter, currently about 40, saves the chapter postage. Here's the list:

Personal email addresses concealed

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 14, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.
NOTE: NO MEETINGS IN JULY AND AUGUST.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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AUGUST 2010



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Aug. 11, 2010



Chapter 1 President Andy Megrath cooked beef at the Vermont Veterans Home picnic June 26.

Eight members attended.

Members approved without dissent the June minutes as printed in the newsletter.

Dave Mathis reported \$26,043.48 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

President Andy Megrath reported membership at 134, including 92 life members, 42 who have joined from one to three years, and three associate members. A couple of new memberships are anticipated.

Andy and Robin Mainwaring-Healey reported on the Agent Orange meeting June 19 at the State House in Montpelier. Chapter 1 board member Bill Whitney also attended. Sen. Bernie Sanders was present, and Sen. Patrick Leahy and Rep. Peter Welch sent representatives. Andy described the session

as "pretty well attended" and said that "things went very well."

There was some testimony to the effect that products coming out of Vietnam today are generally free of dioxin, the toxic substance known to have contaminated Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Robin, an associate member much younger than our Vietnam veteran members, took 22 pages of notes on the meeting. In a heartfelt introduction to her summary of the session, she said, referring to herself, "I don't know how it's possible to have grown up so ignorant of everything that's gone on."

She expressed her pride in veterans and thanked us for our service, patriotism and courage. "You gave of yourselves to . . . protect another country from aggression and share freedom with that country's people. I have only words to tell you of my deep concern for your status in the struggle to get recognition, justice and medical treatment."

She admitted she had had no awareness of the "long appalling battle Vietnam veterans and others, for a variety of reasons, have had to fight" and still must fight for "honorable care." She said she "was ignorant of the vast scope of the shocking problems Vietnam veterans and other veterans face."

In the course of the Montpelier meeting, Robin said, "it became apparent that the toxic war chemicals that Vietnam veterans were exposed to in all areas during the course of the Vietnam conflict are a scourge of tragic, continuing proportions for Vietnam veterans."

"Not for themselves alone — for their families — spouses, children, grandchildren and an unknown number of future generations of children, the cost is just as severe," she said.

"Equally important," she continued, "was the Vietnam veterans' level of awareness" of the struggles of other veterans from different conflicts, "the acute concerns that these other veterans must not be left to suffer," and the determination of Vietnam veterans to prevent their fellow warriors "from being treated similarly."

"During veterans' and veterans' families' testimony, notice was keenly voiced that necessary research has not been accomplished," she noted. "Repeatedly stated was the desire for good credible research to

be done, this being of utmost importance to all afflicted — past, present and in the future. Chief among concerns brought forward is the lack of responsive scientific research accomplishment, not only for veterans in veterans' lifetimes but for the suffering spouses, children, adult children and grandchildren of veterans."

Vietnam veterans spoke of "their grave awareness of" and their concern for "the toxic war chemicals exposure being experienced by warriors in the current theater with the full knowledge of the devastating, disabling effects these brave warriors' own spouses, children, adult children, grandchildren and further future generations will suffer."

Also prominent at the meeting, she noted, was testimony on the destructiveness of post traumatic stress disorder. Veterans repeatedly stated its known repercussions and wanted research into its connection with toxic environmental warfare, she said.

She was struck by Vietnam veterans sense of responsibility to tell other American veterans about the disabilities, dysfunctions and birth defects caused by and resulting from the uses of Agent Orange, dioxin, and other toxic war substances."

A comprehensive informational packet was made available to those that attended. **Anyone interested may drop a note to VVA Chapter 1 at 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026 and request it.**

In other news, Andy Megrath has been elected vice president of the VVA State Council at the council's meeting June 26, putting him in a position to succeed John Miner, longtime State Council president, in two years. As a result, Andy is now participating in national and regional VVA meetings, including a recent regional meeting in Bennington. The meeting allows participants to meet other VVA officials from around New England, which constitutes Region 1. Andy said he is hoping John will continue as VVA liaison to the Vermont Legislature after John's term as president ends.

Andy is expecting to accompany John to Washington, D.C., in October for the next meeting of the VVA board and state council presidents.

June 26 was also the date of the Vermont Veterans Home picnic, served by VVA members from around the state. Andy, Jack Crowther and Robin took part from Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 plans to update on Veterans Day in November the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Anyone wishing to have his or her name added should contact Chapter 1 at the above address. A copy of one's service record, Form DD 214, verifying Vietnam service is required. The veteran must also have entered the service from Rutland County.

Dick Doyle noted that the Veterans Administration has opened a health clinic in Brattleboro. The clinic, a satellite of the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, is located at 71 GSP Drive in Brattleboro and has hours every weekday. The phone number is 802-251-2200.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE CHAPTER WILL SKIP THE SEPTEMBER MEETING; THE NEXT MEETING WILL
BE WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13, AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES
AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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SEPTEMBER 2011



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING Sept. 14, 2011



On June 27, the giant Patriot Flag (30 by 60 feet) visited downtown Rutland as part of its journey around the country. It was scheduled to make its way to Ground Zero in New York City on Sept. 11. Andy Megrath brought the flag over from New Hampshire and took part in the flag raising.

Seven members attended.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of \$23,670.15 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. Ed will continue checking local credit unions to see if the chapter might earn more interest on its savings.

President Andy Megrath read a letter from member Roberto Eaton of Paraguay, a former Vermonter. Andy enlisted the help of Vermont Sen. Bernard Sanders to help Eaton's son unite with his wife at his current duty station in Hawaii.

The wife is a native of Paraguay and was having trouble getting the resident visa necessary to join her husband. She now has the visa and is with her husband and "most happy." Her husband is a two-tour veteran of the war in Iraq.

Gov. Shumlin has appointed Andy to the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council. The council has 17 members. The appointment is for two years but normally is extended if the member wishes. Andy has already attended one meeting in Randolph. He is on the Legislative Committee, which was to meet the Monday following the Chapter meeting. The council advises the governor on veterans' issues. The appointment represents yet another "hat" worn by Andy in addition to his being president of the chapter, vice president of the VVA State Council and participating in other vet-related activities. He said he hopes to speak for the interests of the common soldiers who had "boots on the ground."

Andy unveiled a prototype of a VVA State Council patch that was designed by his granddaughter and made up by Initial Ideas in Rutland. The patch features a representation for the state Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon, along with colors of the Vietnam Service Medal, set in a round patch.

Andy reported on his trip to the VVA National Convention in Reno, Nev., in August. John Rowan was re-elected president, but the other three officers are new. Committee chair appointments are in the works and a cause of some controversy, according to Andy. Andy said Rowan would like to make some changes and that's caused some discontent among those who feel the current chairs have done a good job. The Board of Directors will decide the issue in October.

"When I left Reno it was 110 degrees, and I landed in Albany, it was 54," Andy noted. "So, a little bit of a temperature change."

"I was very surprised," he went on, "same way I was when I went to Washington (to VVA board meetings

in 2010). It's all business, right from the go in the morning till close of business at the end of the day. There were 756 delegates from around the states."

"There was quite a discussion Friday afternoon when we went into session about where this organization's going to go," Andy continued. "There are a lot of people that are saying 'last man standing,' meaning no new members from outside the Vietnam War era. "There are people saying we should turn it over to these young guys (young veterans) and allow them to come in, and there are guys that are arguing they don't want to change the name and allow these guys to take over the organization. And there are guys that basically said, well, we are the only congressional approved organization for Vietnam veterans, and it took an act of Congress in order to get that and it would be the IRS and all the other people that would be involved in changing the name."

Andy noted there is a national organization of sons and daughters of Vietnam vets, and some felt they're the ones that the organization should be turned over to "because they would carry on with the same ideals." "It was a pretty — I won't say loud — but it was a very active discussion," Andy said. "There were pros and cons. It was a good three hours long, and they finally just cut it short because there wasn't anybody that was really for any one thing. . . . And that's basically all it was meant to be, a discussion to get people's feelings out there."

Andy noted a couple of vet-related housing projects, one of which will provide homes near VA medical centers to house the family members of vets receiving treatment. Another project is sponsored by the Home Depot Foundation to commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11. From then until Veterans Day (Nov. 11) of this year, Home Depot is offering to conduct work projects on military members' personal homes. Home Depot will provide the materials, labor and contractors. Projects will include repairs and installations. Priorities are: 1) Wounded warriors returning from combat and disabled veterans, 2) Members returning from deployment, 3) Members with special needs (either themselves or family members), and 4) All others. Further details can be found at the foundation's website: <http://homedepotfoundation.org/>.

Also available free for vets is the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) Driver Safety Program, during the month of November. Spouses and surviving spouses are eligible to attend. The program is a four-hour classroom refresher course designed to help older drivers keep up to date on safe driving strategies. Several insurance companies offer a discount to graduates. Anyone interested can register using the program's online course locator at www.aarp.org/findacourse. Dave Peters, Vermont state coordinator for the program, is happy to answer questions at 802-888-3394 or davep@pwshift.com.

The computer that Andy has been using for VVA business is "past the point of usefulness," despite a previous enhancement to it. After a brief discussion, Dave Mathis moved to allot up to \$1,500 for a new computer and necessary software. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

The old computer is available to any chapter member who can use it. Get in touch with Andy at 802-775-1745 or vtthogman@comcast.net, if interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

OCTOBER 2011



NOTE: In an effort to save time and expense in mailing the newsletter, the newsletter will now be emailed to any member for whom we have an email address. **HOWEVER**, if you notify us that you want to receive a hard copy, we'll be glad to continue sending it by regular mail. Simply email President Andy Megrath at vthogman@comcast.org and let him know. At present the newsletter goes to about 40 members electronically, saving the chapter postage and time.

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING Oct. 12, 2011

Seven members attended, including life member Mike Murphy of Chantilly, Va. Mike was originally from Rutland and is retired from the military.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of \$25,357.20 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. Ed has done some checking with credit unions in comparison with Citizens Bank, which has been charging us a \$3 monthly service charge and paying virtually nothing in interest on the chapter's money market account of about \$20,000.

In line with Ed's recommendation, Dave Mathis moved to establish checking and savings accounts with the Heritage Family Credit Union. Seconded by Mike Divoll. Passed unanimously. Though the interest rates on the accounts are low, about half a percent on savings and .15 percent on checking, the chapter won't have to pay service charges.

President Andy Megrath showed off the new laptop computer the chapter authorized him to acquire for chapter purposes. With software, the bill came to \$1,100, including a carrying case.

Andy reported that since the last meeting the chapter had made a \$250 donation to the widow of a Vietnam veteran living in Rutland. She had been without hot water in her house for a month. Vermont Thunder and three VVA chapters in Vermont donated a total of \$1,000 for oil for the woman. Chapter 1 also provided a \$75 grocery card for a needy Vietnam vet living in Brandon on a fixed income. Bethany Johnson, the family assistance person for the Vermont National Guard in Rutland had made Andy aware of the Brandon vet's need. In line with chapter requirements, Andy consulted with chapter officers and board members before authorizing the expenditures.

Andy noted the chapter has 96 life members.

Vice President Dave Mathis, reporting on the last VVA State Council meeting, said a new associate member of VVA is becoming a new service officer, to assist vets in dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs. His name is Brian Perry and will be able to use Chapter One's office to meet with vets. Andy Megrath noted there will be three new service officers in Vermont, which should allow reasonably good coverage of the state.

Mike Murphy inquired as to what had happened with the Disabled American Veterans fundraising for a van to transport vets to the VA Center in White River Junction. Andy recounted that the last report of the DAV's fundraising showed it hadn't gotten far. Chapter 1 minutes indicate that we made an initial donation of \$300 in January of 2010. Another \$700 was approved in June 2010, but was contingent on a report on the DAV's fundraising progress. That donation was never made, according to Chapter 1 financial records.

Meanwhile, an anonymous Chapter 1 member donated \$1,000 to the DAV for the van. Andy is planning to check with Dennis Clark of the local DAV on the status of the van fundraising. The local DAV was supposed to come up with \$14,100 as the local share for the purchase of the van.

Andy reported on the activities of the veterans meeting place set up by Castleton State College. A house donated to the college by a college staff member will eventually become a permanent home for the college's

veterans services. For now, the college has set aside space in an existing building for vet group meetings and an office for a veterans counselor. Among the services currently offered to vets are individual meetings with readjustment counselor Brad Young and weekly group sessions for combat veterans and wives of combat vets.

Meanwhile, the college is hoping for donations such as heating oil to support the center. Andy Megrath is hoping to use his new seat on the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council to push for state support of an official Vet Center in Castleton, to supplement the two centers in White River Junction and South Burlington. He has been told that establishing an official Vet Center will take an act of Congress. Andy is planning to meet with CSC President David Wolk to see what he (Andy) can do to move the issue forward. At the federal level, he has talked with Sen. Bernie Sanders' staff.

The following Chapter 1 members have chosen to have their email addresses listed in the newsletter to share with other members. Anyone who would like to add their name to the list can simply email Dick Doyle, who is maintaining the list. Dick's email is rpdoyle3@myfairpoint.net. Mass mailings to the list should be limited to Chapter 1 business. Names in boldface represent additions or recent changes.

Here's the list:

Personal email addresses concealed

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, DEC. 14, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



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NOVEMBER 2010



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING Nov. 10, 2010

Ten members attended, highest total in recent memory. President Andy Megrath had sent out separate meeting reminders, which increased attendance.

Andy will continue to send out meeting notices. He also encouraged members to receive the chapter newsletter by email, which saves postage. See the end of the newsletter for information on our email list for members and how to simply receive the newsletter by email without sharing your address with the membership.

Members approved without dissent the October minutes as printed in the newsletter.

Dave Mathis reported \$28,778.69 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. Dave noted that the chapter needs to spend some of this money to avoid requirements that apply to a non-profit group that maintains a balance of more than \$25,000 in funds. The requirements come from both the national VVA and the IRS.

Andy Megrath related how Sen. Bernie Sanders' office intervened to assist the son of our member Roberto Eaton-Kent of Paraguay. The son, who is serving in Afghanistan, married a Paraguayan woman. She was having trouble getting a visa to join her husband when he is transferred to Hawaii from his current duty. Andy initiated contact with Sanders' office, which was able to resolve the problem.

Andy reported on the need of the Dodge House, a place for homeless veterans in Rutland, for a new or newer van to replace its existing one. The vehicle is used for transporting residents, especially to the VA Medical Center in White River Junction. Andy and Shaun Branon, of those attending Wednesday, serve on the Dodge Board of Directors. The Dodge House is approaching a local car dealership for a donation, but Chapter 1 may be asked to help financially.

Andy noted that Bethany Bergeron, family assistance coordinator for the Vermont National Guard, has been tapping other sources of assistance for guard families and has not had to seek funds from Chapter 1 of late, even though the chapter is willing to help when needed. With Vermont guard troops coming home over the next few months, need for emergency financial help is less likely to occur.

Dick Doyle said he ran into Chapter 1 charter member Clark Howland at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction. Clark sent his good wishes to Chapter 1 members.

Reporting on national membership, Andy reported national membership of Vietnam Veterans of America at 63,857, more than 3,000 above last year at this time. The figure includes 892 women. More than half the total



Jon Pintello (right) and Jack Crowther of Chapter 1 install the updated Honor Roll on Veterans Day at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Thirteen names were added. About 40-50 people attended.



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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DECEMBER 2011



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MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Dec. 14, 2011



Dick Doyle (left), is shown with Capt. Cole Derosa and Tony Cox at Fort Campbell, Ky., in November. Doyle and Cox were recognized as Distinguished Members of the 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. Details on back of newsletter.

Six members attended.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of \$23,357.46 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

Andy, attending his first meeting since knee replacement surgery, noted the chapter has 133 regular members and 4 associate members.

Andy noted that Clayton Clark is moving on from his job as veteran services director of the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs at the end of December. Candidates are being screened and a replacement should be on board by the middle of January.

Wearing another of his veterans' hats, Andy on Dec. 13 attended a meeting of the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council, of which he is a new member. He serves on the Legislative Committee. At the

session, members put three main money issues before the governor:

1. A recommendation to increase funds for the Veterans Assistance Fund, raising the appropriation from \$28,815 to \$48,000, which was its previous level. Andy said that in the past a veteran who called for help would typically get \$500, but the amount was cut to \$200 when the appropriation was reduced. According to Andy, the governor said he would find a way to put the appropriation back to \$48,000. Clayton Clark reported there had been a major increase in people calling for assistance.
2. Support of a master plan for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Randolph. It will cost the state \$250,000 to have an engineering company produce the plan. Once the master plan is done and approved, the federal government will reimburse the state.
3. The committee supports Vermont House Bill 50, which would exempt the first \$5,000 of military retirement pay from state taxes. The surrounding states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York provide some exemption, whereas Vermont currently does not. A surge in retirements from the National Guard is anticipated.



Five non-monetary issues presented to Gov. Peter Shumlin included:

1. Work with the secretary of state is needed to streamline licensure procedures for veterans when their service is applicable to the license they are seeking.

The new VVA Vermont State Council patch is available for \$5 to members. See back of newsletter for details.

2. Support was voiced for Vermont House Bill 39, which would recognize military advance directives, amending rules to no longer require Vermont residency for the directives to be obeyed. Advance directives are legal documents to ensure your end-of-life and other critical health care matters will be acted on according to your wishes.

3. A recommendation to set at 900 feet the buffer zone between protesters and military funerals and make the fine for violations \$750. The issue of protests at military funerals has come before the courts elsewhere. Apparently, protesters may cross the buffer zone if they don't carry out verbal harassment or carry placards within the funeral area.

4. A suggestion to add a person's veteran's status to his driver's license when requested by the driver.

5. A recommendation to expand the moose hunting lottery of five permits for Global War on Terror veterans to all veterans. The council felt the lottery for one group of veterans was unfair.

Andy said Gov. Shumlin basically supported the measures proposed, but had some concerns about the money involved. Andy said the meeting lasted about two hours and was "a good meeting."

Andy displayed the newly completed VVA State Council patches (pictured on the front of the newsletter). The patch was designed by his granddaughter. Chapter members may purchase them for \$5. Send the money to Andy, care of VVA Chapter 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026. A self-addressed stamped envelope would be appreciated.

Carl Baldwin of Santa Fe, New Mexico, sent the chapter a \$250 donation, a continuation of contributions he has made in the past. Carl is a member of Chapter 1.

Patrick Conway Jr. wrote to request that the spelling of the name of his brother, Richard Conway, on the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial be corrected. It's now listed as "Gonway." The chapter will correct it at the next revision of the Honor Roll.

Robert Wheeler, treasurer of the VVA State Council, wrote to inform us of a bank account being set up to purchase flags in years ahead for the VVA flag and flagpole at the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. The large, 8-foot-by-10-foot flags cost \$500 each.

Dick Doyle moved to donate \$250, later amended to \$1,000, to support the fund. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

The day after this meeting, Jack Crowther, Chapter 1 secretary, learned from Dennis Clark of the local Disabled American Veterans chapter that the DAV had ordered a new van to transport veterans to the VA Center in White River Junction. An anonymous Chapter 1 member donated \$1,000 to the DAV for the van, and Chapter 1 donated \$300. The van is expected to be delivered in the spring and is paid for with national DAV funds, local fundraising and DAV chapter funds.

Dick Doyle is a Chapter 1 board member, longtime membership chair and a retired Army sergeant major. He saw combat duty with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam and volunteered for active service with the Army Reserve during 2001 and 2002. In November he received a Distinguished Member of the Regiment award from the 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. He was among four World War II vets and 17 Vietnam War veterans so honored in ceremonies at Fort Campbell, Ky., home of the 101st. Dick not only served 33 years in the military but also spent 33 years working as a veterans employment specialist with the state Department of Employment and Training. Congratulations, Dick!

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested